

The Indigenous Midwifery Team



Introduction to the Indigenous Midwifery Team

The purpose of the Indigenous Midwifery Team (IM team) is to support the return of birth home to all First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM) communities through Indigenous midwife-led, community-based, culturally safe reproductive, sexual and infant health care. The Association of Ontario Midwives is uniquely led by co-CEOs – Haudenosaunee Midwife Ellen Kanika Tsi Tsa Blais of Oneida Nation of the Thames and Juana Berinstein – a settler of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry who immigrated to Canada in the 1980s from Argentina where their family had been since the 1880s. The IM Team is comprised of Indigenous and Registered Midwives and Indigenous and non-Indigenous team members – all with diverse experience working with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities.

Guidance

The IM team priorities are guided by the Indigenous Midwifery Advisory Circle (IMAC) – a Committee of the Board – comprised of Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous Midwives and by ongoing consultation with Indigenous Midwives who are members of the AOM.



The IM team's mandate includes:

- ✓ Advancing growth, funding, integration and sustainability of Indigenous midwifery through negotiations with the Ministry of Health and ongoing bilateral relations with the government.
- ✓ Providing holistic member support to Indigenous Midwives, including applications for new/expanded IMPs and CRGs, addressing barriers to practice, and fostering employer relations, etc.
- ✓ Working alongside First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and Indigenous political territorial organizations, including the Chiefs of Ontario and the Assembly of First Nations to promote Indigenous midwifery.
- ✓ Collaborating with the National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM) to ensure cohesion with national efforts to expand Indigenous Midwifery.
- ✓ Engaging in research to evaluate the current landscape of Indigenous Midwifery, determine priorities and support negotiation asks.
- ✓ Supporting communities seeking to increase access to Indigenous midwifery care by connecting them to resources and supporting relationship building between IMPs
- ✓ Hosting gatherings for Indigenous midwives to address needs and determine priorities and ensure AOM-event offerings are infused with Indigenous midwifery content and representation.



Support and Resources

The Indigenous Midwifery team does not make decisions about IMP or Community Readiness Grant (CRG) applications or budgets. However, Indigenous midwives are actively involved in the review of applications. The Ministry of Health manages IMP and CRG funding directly with TPAs and/or employers.

The IM team cannot intercede on behalf of midwives with their employers. However, IM team staff can provide support and resources for midwives to help resolve issues with their employer and/or TPA directly. Members can access AOM OnCall, a confidential resource for members who seek support for concerns arising from practice for which legal, ethical or practice-related advice is required, and which may include referral to HIROC or legal counsel.

The AOM provides clinical and professional development opportunities for midwives, including Emergency Skills Workshop (ESW) and Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP). Visit www.aom.on.ca/upcoming-events for more information.

Get involved and get more information

The IM Team is eager to engage with Indigenous Midwives, please reach out to share your areas of need, insights and concerns. For more information or to access resources and support, please contact the IM Team.